



December 17, 2007

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Unionized Ekati Diamond Mine workers ratify 4-year collective agreement with BHP Billiton**

**Yellowknife, NT** – Unionized workers at the Ekati Diamond Mine have voted to ratify a new four-year collective agreement with majority owner BHP Billiton, the Australian-based multinational resource corporation.

And union leaders say the solidarity maintained by their 400 members throughout a three-month long strike in 2006 strengthened negotiations for this second contract. The new agreement was reached without another labour dispute.

The four-year agreement bargained by the Public Service Alliance of Canada and the Union of Northern Workers provides for pay increases tied to the cost-of-living plus, a performance-based incentive program, improved job security and a new Alternate Dispute Resolution process that addresses better labour relations.

"This agreement is a big step forward for our members who stuck together in solidarity through and after a tough strike," said Jean-François Des Lauriers, Regional Executive Vice-President – PSAC North.

"This contract is a victory for our members who supported their union through some very tough times over the past eight years," Des Lauriers said, "Our members understand that a contract is a work in progress. The union will work with its members to assist them in ensuring that all of the terms of the new agreement are strictly followed."

Todd Parsons, President of the Union of Northern Workers, one of PSAC's components, said he hopes this new agreement is the next step to a better working environment for members employed at BHP.

"The union looks forward to improved labour relations at the mine through the new Joint Union-Management Committee," Parsons said. "Our members have shown that they support the new collective agreement, negotiated through the hard work and dedication of their bargaining team."

Parsons indicated that the ratification vote was counted December 14, at the Ekati Mine in the Union's new on site office.

Ekati is Canada's first diamond mine, producing 6 per cent of the world's diamond supply by value or 4 per cent by weight and yields 3 to 5 million carats annually. It is located 300 km northeast of Yellowknife and 200 km south of the Arctic Circle.

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